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Note on Matthew xvi. 18.

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Mt. xvi. 18: καὶ ἐπὶ ταύτῃ τῇ πέτρᾳ οἰκοδομήσω μου τὴν ἐκκλησίαν.

PLATO, *Rep.* x. 611 D (ed. Hermann): τεθεάμεθα μέντοι διακείμενον αὐτό, ὥσπερ οἱ τὸν θαλάττιον Γλαῦκον ὀρώντες οὐκ ἂν ἔτι ῥαδίως αὐτοῦ ἴδοιεν τὴν ἀρχαίαν φύσιν, ὑπὸ τοῦ τά τε παλαιὰ τοῦ σώματος μέρη τὰ μὲν ἐκκεκλᾶσθαι, τὰ δὲ συντετριφθῆναι καὶ πάντως λεωβῆσθαι ὑπὸ τῶν κυμάτων, ἄλλα δὲ προσπεφυκέναι, ὅστρεά τε καὶ φυκία καὶ πέτρας, ὥστε παντὶ μᾶλλον θηρίῳ ἐοικέναι, κτλ.

“There is no example, in good authors, of πέτρα in the sense of πέτρος, a stone.” Liddell and Scott, p. 1207 i.

The above distinction, also held by some commentators on the N.T., can hardly be maintained, as the passage cited from Plato shows. Plato has been arguing the immortality of the soul. At present, he says, the soul is marred by association with the body and by contact with other evils.

In his comparison, τὸν θαλάττιον Γλαῦκον, Plato must intend πέτρα in the sense of πέτρος, else the passage is unintelligible. Here, then, is one good classical reference to be cited against “some commentators” who advance the traditional rule.